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TELL CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT SIKH HISTORY

California State Board of Education

1430 N Street, Suite #5111

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Colleagues:

I urge you to repudiate misguided efforts by non-Sikh organizations to rewrite Sikh history in the History & Social Science Framework for California.

California occupies a special place in Sikh history. Many of the first Sikh American immigrants to the United States settled in California at the turn of the 20th century. The first American Gurdwara (Sikh House of Worship) was established in Stockton, California in 1912. The first Sikh American Member of Congress was Dalip Singh Saund, who represented the 29th District of California from 1957 to 1963. More recently, in 2012, the California Sikh community spearheaded an interfaith campaign to pass AB1964 – the California Workplace Religious Freedom Act.

In the Framework, it is critical that the word "Sikh" not be replaced with the generic and limiting catchphrase, "South Asian." I believe that every minority community deserves the right to celebrate their unique heritage and contributions to California's history. Rather than deleting references to Sikhs, I urge you to expand the list of minority communities that have added to the vibrancy of California.

In the Framework, it is equally critical that non-Sikh organizations not be allowed to distort the history and teachings of the Sikh religion. The Sikh faith is an independent religion founded over five centuries ago by Guru Nanak and based on a belief in one God and the equality of all human beings. Consistent with the Sikh belief in universal equality, Guru Nanak rejected the caste system, and the rejection of the caste system is a core tenet of the Sikh religion. I urge you to preserve facts like these about our religion in the Framework in consultation with Sikh scholars.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

First Name*

Last Name*

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▼

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